

THE ADVENTURES OF KITTY COBB



PICTURES & TEXT BY
JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG











To My Dear Mother



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OF KITTY COBB





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GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

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JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAHERTY

I.—HER DEPARTURE

In which Kitty Cobb, having an imperative craving for the city of big hopes — and the inexhaustible sum of \$130 — parts from her parents and Pleasant Valley. Although she is affectionate she sheds no tears. SHE is not being left behind. No, gentle spectator, she does not pine for the stage. Of course this apathy in regard to the allurements of the footlights is abnormal. Otherwise Kitty is a healthy American Girl. She is tired of the monotony of country life. Ed Randall, her mute and inglorious lover, hears the end of the world coming on the down track. One tragic tear trickling down the sunburned nose is his last tribute to the girl that couldn't care.

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II.—HER ARRIVAL

In which Kitty arrives in the city of big hopes and appeals in her confusion to the gallant and courteous constable for directions to the boarding house, the address of which a friend has written on a piece of paper. Young gentlemen of fashion (ready made) gaze curiously and with amusement at her attire. It seems to antedate the Christian era. But as Kitty has the American trait of adaptability it is not unlikely that in a short time she will surpass in sartorial smartness these carping Broadway Brummells. It is just possible—with fairly decent luck.

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III.—HOMESICKNESS

In which Kitty first remembers that it was only a few hours back that she kissed them goodbye in Pleasant Valley. This hall bedroom is not like her own little room under the eaves. That was not her mother's voice downstairs—it was some stranger's—and yet—and how can a noisy city seem like a desert island? She hears some one singing "You Great Big Beautiful Doll." It gives her a queer, uncomfortable feeling. They will miss her playing a hymn on the melodeon before they go to bed. The frogs are not singing to-night. Anyway, city frogs wouldn't sing country lullabies—they would probably sing something terrifying like that awful thing that woman was singing next door. Aren't tears silly things?

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IV.—A FRIEND

In which Kitty's \$130 has somehow leaked away. Even this smaller room another flight up costs money. But for Miss LeClaire's help she would be standing on the sidewalk, with the door shut on her and her valise inside. Even if Miss LeClaire did put black stuff around her eyes she was dear and good. What did she call herself—queen of burlesque? Mrs. Cameron, the lady to whom the queen of burlesque paid the money, curiously enough had to meet bills herself, or she in turn would have found herself in the street. But then, why worry about her and her troubles?—she would always have the consolations of a splendid Southern past.

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V.—HER FIRST POSITION

In which Kitty performs her duties as "Number 37" in the handkerchief department of the enormous emporium. Not being used as yet to the manners of the Metropolis, she is at a loss to understand the tittering of the other ladies-in-waiting on her highness, Queen Shopper. She waits on an old lady with kindness and courtesy natural to her, and Liz, Mayme and Sadie observe our heroine with open amusement as she goes to the absurd extreme of helping the venerable and stiff-fingered lady stow away her parcels in her handbag. No doubt if Kitty had been a lady-in-waiting as long as her companions in scissory, she, too, might have become hardened in that underpaid employment

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VI. HER FIRST INVITATION

In which Kitty attracts the admiring attention of Mr. Theobald Tripper, walker of floors, dry goods dragoman—the very erect person in faultless black who tells you that cut glass celery dishes are four aisles over to the left when he is well aware that they are three flights down to the right. Mayme and Sadie overhear Mr. Tripper, the unimpressible, making an engagement to call for Kitty at twenty to eight on Wednesday evening. That he will be greatly pleased to escort her to the play and that he is immensely taken with her eyes. Not that it makes the slightest difference to Mayme or Sadie—not the remotest. They always felt there was a lack in Mr. Tripper.

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VII.—AT THE THEATRE

In which Kitty attends the play, the performance being that sprightly comedy, "Her Husband's Wife." Mr. Tripper, her escort, admits that he goes to the balcony because he prefers to sit up high and enjoys the mild exercise of stair-climbing. Kitty makes no comment on his views, but immediately decides that the orchestra would suit her better. She has really forgotten the existence, for the moment, of the walker of floors. She is absorbed in watching the incoming crowd—the costumes of the women of fashion. She hopes that sometime she will go to the theatre without a hat, walk up no stairs, and that her escort will not wear a coffee-colored derby.

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VIII.—HER FIRST PROPOSAL

In which Kitty is returning home one evening in the subway, allowing Mr. Tripper, the walker of floors, to accompany her as far as her station. He asks her to substitute the name of Tripper for that of Cobb. She says "No" without looking at him. In fact she hardly hears him, so interested is she in the appearance and personality of a young gentleman a seat or two to her left. Luckily for her modesty, the swagger youngster does not notice the admiring gaze of our heroine. He is thinking over a successful little deal he had managed in "the Street." Later on, circumstances arise that make him notice Kitty very particularly. Poor Tripper is outclassed. He will have to court a less ambitious girl.

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IX.—A DIFFICULT JOB

In which Kitty, through studying at night, has gained enough self-confidence to resign from the enormous emporium and take a position as stenographer with the firm of Sandford & Son. Both Sandford & Son, upon seeing Kitty, absolutely refused to even glance at her references. They welcomed her with joy to their offices. Kitty makes it a rule not to converse with either of her employers except on business matters. Therefore Sandford & Son are hard put to it to concoct business letters enough to excuse their desire for her company. Young Dave, when no legitimate excuse offers itself, has resorted to dictating "Alice in Wonderland" to Kitty in order to live up to the letter of her law. The worst of it is, Sandford & Son find themselves continually attempting to dictate simultaneously. Which is confusing to even an experienced stenographer.

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X.—SANDFORD & SON LOSE KITTY

In which Kitty, through no fault of her own, except the unpardonable offense of youth and beauty, finds herself deprived of her position. Mrs. Sandford, wife and mother of the firm, chanced to catch a glimpse of Kitty one day, and like the excellent wife and mother she is, at once decided that there were other types of typewriters. She made it her immediate business to unearth one of the other types and promptly produced it, to the utter dismay and chagrin of the firm. And, realizing that the hand that wears the wedding ring rules these United States, they accepted the substitute with the best grace at their command at the time, which was not of a high grade.

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XI.—LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB

In which Kitty accepts the kind offices of her old friend, Miss LeClaire, who takes her to a theatrical agency and gets her a job as usher in the Puritan theatre. Kitty is charmed with the courteous reception accorded Miss LeClaire and herself, and is astounded at the courtly old-school manners of the gentleman in charge, who combines the well-bred deference of Col. Carter with the grace and bearing of the Marquis de Lafayette. He made her think of Lord Chesterfield and Beau Brummel, too. And a little of Talleyrand. Kitty felt a certain sense of unreality in the scene. As if she were suddenly volplaned back to the days of powdered periwig, satin breeches, candle light, flowered waistcoats and the minuet. What a shock was in store for her when she descended the stair to the Great Rude Way.

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XII.—MRS. EFFINGHAM CALDECOTT INTERVENES

reads its love-letters aloud to its running mates—is attracted by Kitty's beauty and for some reason, imperceivable to others, fancies itself fatally fascinating and irresistible to the deadlier sex. Mrs. Effingham Caldecott, a lady of courage and wealth, as she is leaving the theatre, overhears some remarks addressed to Kitty by this amorous ape. Mrs. Caldecott promptly takes in the situation and intervenes physically. She then takes Kitty, to whom she has been instantly attracted, under her motherly wing and persuades her to come home with her in her limousine.

In which Kitty is performing her duties as usher in the Puritan theatre. A moneyed and brainless "Johnny"—the sort that

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XIII.—IN CLOVER

In which Kitty has become the pet of the Caldecott household, with the exception of the daughter Eloise. But that spoiled young lady's lack of cordiality is more than made up for by Mrs. Caldecott's devotion. Not to mention the son, Bob. Bob, of course, as you have guessed, was the chap Kitty saw in the Subway that time when Mr. Tripper vainly offered her his pudgy hand in marriage. Bob, as may be noticed in his expression, has a very aggravated case of enlargement of the heart. Kitty is a good sized girl and takes up every cubic inch in it. You know how it is yourself.

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XIV.—AFTER THE BALL

In which Kitty is having the time of her life. Mrs. Caldecott gave a reception and dance for her and her engagement to Bob was announced. She and he are practising the wedding march, as most of the guests have gone. Young Delancy Schermerhorn has had the shock of his career and cannot get it through his 6½ head that Kitty, who appears to be a rather clever girl—as girls go—has actually refused him and his millions. Him, a Schermerhorn! The girl must be mad!

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XV.—HER CHAMPION

In which Kitty's sister-in-law elect has made some acid and uncalled for remarks to Bob about marrying outside one's own set. Bob objects to the thinly veiled slurs on Kitty, her lack of family, position and income, and, like our old classmate the worm, turns and tells his sister a few home truths about the immorality of her course in engaging herself to a rich rake whom she does not love. The rake, as may be seen, does not relish the raking.

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XVI.—FROM *THE PLEASANT VALLEY TRUMPET*

the bride's ancestral home, the Rev. Eliphalet Sweet, our esteemed pastor, officiating. A tasty and recherche collation was served, all partaking freely. Rumor hath it that Mr. Ed Randall, a former rejected suitor for the fair hand of the bride, attempted self-destruction by an over indulgence in creamed oysters. Only by the prompt action and heroic treatment administered by Mr. Simeon Curry, our leading veterinary, was the despairing lover's existence on this mundane sphere prolonged. Miss LeClaire, of N. Y., acted as maid of honor to the blushing bride. An elegant time was had by each and every one, all wishing the happy pair good luck."

"Miss Kitty Cobb, of this township, was joined at Hymen's altar to Mr. Robert Caldecott of New York. The wedding transpired at

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XVII.—AT THE HONEYMOON HOTEL

In which Kitty is embarrassed on the evening of her wedding day, when she and Bob reach New York, by Husband's forgetting to register for her. We have a vague suspicion that Bob is not the first Bridegroom on record who blandly signed his own name and omitted "and Mrs." And was called back by the clerk to acknowledge his condition of servitude to the world. Kitty spunkily told Bob that because he and she were one he needn't presume that he was the one!

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XVIII.—STILL MORE EMBARRASSMENT

In which Kitty, after they had taken possession of the Bridal Chamber, opened her travelling bag and spilled enough rice out of it to keep a large family in puddings for months. She rang for the maid to sweep it up and is nevertheless pretending she knows nothing about it. Bob is muttering something to the effect that it must have been left by some salesman travelling for a cereal house who spilt his samples carelessly. "A bride and her groom may pretend all they will, but the flavor of Honeymoon hangs 'round them still!"

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XIX.—AT VIRGINIA HOT SPRINGS

In which Kitty and Bob are spending the A. M. on the golf links. Bob has found a brand new place to kiss—right behind her little ear, hidden from sight by a yellow curl. Of course the rule of golf that players must leave the green immediately upon holing out, means nothing to these young Honeymoonatics. There is really no one on this planet but themselves. Golf is not a game—it's an excuse to be alone together out of doors. So the rest of you may go die if you like!

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XX.—HOME IN A HOT WAVE

In which Kitty and her Bob are in their own apartment in town. They are at dinner—in evening clothes. 96 degrees in the shade evening clothes. And dining—if you call iced tea dinner. Bob escaped arrest this afternoon. The 32nd Imbecile said to him, "It isn't so much the heat—it's the humidity." Bob, by that time, hadn't enough ginger to commit homicide. He is going to send his Kitty out of the heat to the seashore at once.

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XXI.—SIR! I'M A MARRIED WOMAN!

In which Kitty is on the way to Whitesands. Bob can't get away yet. In the drawing-room car she is quite annoyed by the attentions of an elderly flirt with a purple moustache, and hummocks under his eyes. And an irresistible manner. He thinks it irresistible. Kitty doesn't. And she is not versed in the Gentle Art of Canning Mashers. He is a persistent old Ostrich. An Ostrich is a bird that, because it buries its head in a bay wig and inks its moustache, thinks no one can see its paunch and dewlaps!

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XXII.—ARE ALL MEN ALIKE?

In which Kitty is having her eyes opened to married life by Mrs. Tewne Owing, an older married woman. Mrs. Tewne Owing, having picked out a rotter as a mate, logically declares that all men are alike and dilates bitterly on the consistent nastiness of males. Kitty being inexperienced cannot discount these cynical generalities. She will not believe that her Bob is like that—but there seems to be a chill in the sunshine. She believes she will walk back to the hotel.

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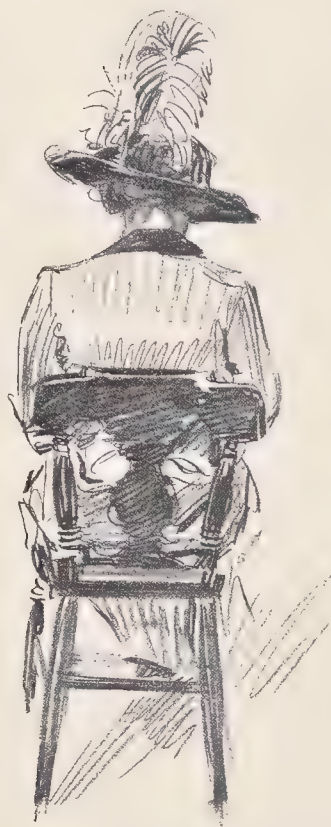


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XXIII.—PLATONIC FRIENDSHIP—NOT!

In which Kitty has been strolling up the beach with young Stevens, looking for "lucky" stones. She has listened with interest to his description of his friendship for her. He says it is Platonic. But when, as they stand watching the big rollers tumbling toward them, he tries to put his arm around her waist, Kitty has serious misgivings about Mr. Plato's brand of friendship. That's why she is running like a scared young lady rabbit away from there.

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XXIV.—PALM READING

In which Kitty is greatly embarrassed, though entirely innocent of philandering. Bob arrives unexpectedly from town and finds her sitting on the hotel veranda with young Stevens holding her hand. At least it seems like that. It was that to Stevens but not to Kitty. Stevens, like all idle rich young men, had many parlour tricks, including the Art of Flattery from Ambush, or Palm Reading. It is almost unnecessary to add that when Kitty was helping Bob to unpack his dressing case a little later she had to listen to a lecture on Deportment.

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XXV.—HER FIRST BATHING SUIT

In which Kitty starts on her first dip in the ocean. It took Bob an hour of earnest exhortation and prayer to get her to come out of her bathhouse. And then it was accomplished only by a vile masculine trick. Bob told her there was a large, hairy spider about the general build and size of Jim Jeffries waiting to drop on her from the ceiling. She came out. Sherman's March to the Sea created no such havoc as Kitty's.

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XXVI. — JEALOUSY

In which Kitty feels for the first time the baleful presence of the monster with the emerald optics. Bob's Aunt Isabel has arrived at Whitesands. Kitty, who has an old-fashioned respect for her elders, feels it her duty to entertain Aunt Isabel, Bob not having shown any special interest in the matter. So Kitty's conversation is rather perfunctory as she watches Bob enjoying himself with that decidedly ordinary Miss Larabee. And under Kitty's own parasol at that!

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XXVII.—BOB'S TURN

In which Kitty allows that pup, Stevens, to teach her to swim, with his big paw right under her chin! The assurance of some of these young bounders is amazing! If Kitty really wanted to learn, wasn't he, Bob, perfectly capable of teaching her? Just because that ninny happened to think of it first was no reason for Kitty's accepting his offer! Just like a woman! She should remember she was a married woman and be a little more reserved with her chin. After all, didn't she promise her chin in holy matrimony to him? Rotten holes these summer resorts, anyway!

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XXVIII.—IS MARRIAGE A FAILURE?

In which Kitty and Bob have reached that stage in their quarrel where they neither will speak to the other. Aunt Isabel, with many predigested chuckles, acts as a mouthpiece for the peevish pair.

"Aunt Isabel, please inform my husband that I am going into the water and if he will condescend to use the same ocean I shall be pleased if he will accompany me!"

"Aunt Isabel, tell my wife that I think I know my duty as her husband and I am quite ready to escort her!"
They really did talk like that!

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XXIX.—YOU WOULD, WOULD YOU?

In which Kitty has started to go out canoeing with that pup, Stevens. Bob, who was watching them came up to Stevens and, after telling him what he thought about three or four things, pushed Stevens into the water. He then took Stevens' place in the stern of the canoe. Kitty, as may be observed, is secretly gratified at this proof of Bob's jealousy. For what, next to a boiled New England dinner, is so satisfying as somebody's jealousy if you're mad at them and love them?

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XXX.—CONSCIENCE STRICKEN!

In which Kitty has not let Bob entirely back into her good graces. It is three o'clock in the morning and she hasn't been able to sleep a wink. She knows she has been mean. She is listening at the door of banished Bob's bedroom to hear him breathe. What if he should die before she had made up with him? She could never forgive herself! Was he breathing? The brute suddenly snores—a 60-H.P., six-cylinder snore! Kitty felt as if some one had slapped her in the face with a wet wash rag!

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XXXI.—BACK TO TOWN!

In which Kitty and Bob are once more good advertisements for the state of matrimony. Their summer holiday is over, but they don't care any more than Eva Tanguay. They are going back to the city of deafening noises, and glad of it. As the baggage master would express it, "Trains they come, and trains they go, but them two sets on forever!" Suppose they do miss their train—suppose they miss eighty-seven trains and a couple of hand cars—what of it? There are slathers of trains—what, I ask you, are a few blooming, cindery, inevitable old trains to moments like this?

















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